

Message Text

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14

ACTION COME-00

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FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

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COMMERCE FOR SANDS

AF/W FOR BISHOP

E.O. 11652: N/A - DECONTROL 30 SEPT 1978

TAGS: BEXP MR

SUBJECT: MAJOR PROJECT: MAURITANIAN FISHERIES

REF: STATE 211938

1. DELIGHTED TO LEARN OF ENCOURAGING RESULTS OF EFFORTS OF MAJOR PROJECTS TO MOVE KRAMER CHIN AND MAYO ALONG TOWARD ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT IN EXPLOITATION OF MAURITANIA'S MARINE WEALTH. POSSIBILITY OF KCM VISIT IS ESPECIALLY SATISFYING.

2. RE POSSIBLE ASSOCIATION WITH FRENCH NATIONAL: WHILE CATEGORIC ANSWER IS NOT POSSIBLE SINCE FRENCHMEN DIFFER, I BELIEVE IN GENERAL THAT AMERICAN FIRMS PLANNING TO ENTER MAURITANIAN MARKET SHOULD AVOID INVOLVEMENTS WITH THIRD-COUNTRY NATIONALS, AND ESPECIALLY WITH FRENCH BUSINESSMEN. DECADE OR MORE AGO, JOINING FORCES WITH INDIVIDUAL OR COMPANY WHICH HAD FRENCH LANGUAGE COMPETENCE AND PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE OF WEST AFRICAN SCENE MAY PERHAPS HAVE BEEN SENSIBLE COURSE FOR AMERICAN COMPANIES AND INDIVIDUAL BUSINESSMEN TO FOLLOW. SITUATION IS QUITE DIFFERENT NOW, HOWEVER, AT LEAST IN MAURITANIA. ANTIQUATED "COLON" MENTALITY OF MOST FRENCH EXPATRIATE BUSINESSMEN SEVERELY TRIES PATIENCE OF MAURITANIANS OFFICIAL AND PRIVATE. SENIOR

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GIRM OFFICIALS HAVE DECLARED THEY DESIRE TO EXPAND COM-

MERCIAL AND TECHNICAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH US IN PART AS MEANS OF BREAKING LONG-STANDING FRENCH MONOPOLY OF MAURITANIAN TRADE AND COMMERCE. MORE TO PRESENT POINT, SENIOR GIRM OFFICIALS HAVE REPEATEDLY MADE CLEAR THAT THEY DESIRE TO DEAL WITH AMERICANS, NOT WITH FRENCH OR OTHER FOREIGN NATIONAL EMPLOYEES OF US FIRMS. RESOLUTION OF ONE COMMERCIAL DISPUTE NOW NEARLY TEN MONTHS OLD, FOR EXAMPLE, IS STALLED PRECISELY BECAUSE GIRM HAS FORMALLY AND INFORMALLY INDICATED IT WILL NOT RPT NOT NEGOTIATE WITH FRENCH HALF OF JOINT VENTURE, AND AMERICAN PARTNER IS UNWILLING TO PROCEED ALONE. ON OTHER HAND, IF FRENCH FISHERIES EXPERT KCM IS CONSIDERING HAS INTELLECTUALLY AND EMOTIONALLY ACCEPTED FACT THAT MAURITANIA IS INDEPENDENT COUNTRY AND IS PREPARED TO REFRAIN FROM TREATING MAURITANIANS AS IF THEY WERE RETARDED CHILDREN, JOINT VENTURE MIGHT WORK.HANDYSIDE

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